

WORKSHOP ABSTRACT

Strengthening Integrated Primary Care: Lessons from Estonia's Reform Journey

25th International Conference on Integrated Care, Lisbon, Portugal, 14-16 May 2025

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Background: This workshop will share the experiences and outcomes of the "Support to Primary Care Reform in Estonia" project of the Estonian Ministry for Social Affairs (MoSA), funded by the European Union (DG REFORM) via the Technical Support Instrument (TSI). Against an all too familiar backdrop of unmet expectations, shortages of physicians and nurses, misaligned reimbursement models, lack of communication and collaboration between actors and services, this project aimed to establish a holistic primary care network connecting all levels of primary care and social services, implementing care pathways, fostering bottom-up networking, promoting culture change on the basis of international best practices to act as an accelerator for the empowerment of local communities.

Audience:

- Policy and healthcare leaders interested in integrated care and primary care reform
- Healthcare professionals and managers seeking to improve collaboration and coordination between care sectors
- Researchers and academics studying integrated care and healthcare systems

Approach: The workshop will try to address a number of challenges to efficient primary care that are all too common across countries, in the European Union and beyond, that can be overcome through a participated reform process. In particular, the workshop will aim to:

- 1.showcase the journey of Estonia's primary care reform so far, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in integrating primary care services.
- 2.present the project's key achievements, including the establishment of a primary care network through extensive dialogue with all stakeholders.
- 3.discuss the benefits and impact of the project on patients, healthcare providers, and the broader healthcare system.
- 4.facilitate a dialogue among participants on, inter alia, the lesson learnt during Estonia's experiences and the potential for adaptability in other countries.
- 5.introduce the opportunities presented by the Technical Support Instrument (TSI).

The agenda will be structured around the following items:

1. Introduction (5 minutes) – Simone Boselli (DG REFORM, European Commission)

- o Overview of the Technical Support Instrument (TSI), role in supporting primary healthcare reforms, and future opportunities

2. Estonia's Road to Primary Care Reform and Integrated Care (20 minutes) – Anneli Taal (Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonia)

- o Context and challenges in Estonian primary care

- o Overview of the project and its objectives

- o Project approach and key activities, including review of best practices

- o Key achievements to date (May 2025)

- o Next steps in the reform process

3. Panel Discussion and interactive Q&A (30 minutes) - Moderated discussion with project representatives and participants focused on

- o How to build up a supportive playground for growing better integrated care

- o Gathering ideas and good practices around care pathways

- o Strategies for fostering bottom-up networking activities

- o How to promote culture change, what is the role of central management

- o Exchange on lessons learnt and

- o Potential for transferability

4. Conclusion and take home messages (5 minutes) –

Simone Boselli (DG REFORM, European Commission)

Outcomes:

- Wrap up by Simone Boselli (European Commission)